

A BYZANTINE MINIATURE  
OF THE FOURTH EVANGELIST  
AND ITS RELATIVES

HUGO BUCHTHAL

This article is a slightly expanded version of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association in New York, on 29 January 1960. I am grateful to the Dumbarton Oaks Publications Committee for their offer to print it in the *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*; to Dr. T. Buddensieg and to Professors Paul Maas, Millard Meiss, Erwin Panofsky, Kurt Weitzmann, and Francis Wormald for help and information on numerous points of detail; and to Miss Alison Frantz for taking the excellent photographs of the two miniatures in Athens especially for publication in this paper.

THE miniature of St. John the Evangelist dictating his Gospel to the scribe Prochoros, which is here illustrated as figure 1, is contained in a fourteenth-century Gospel book in the National Library at Athens, no. 71, and is listed and described in the two catalogues devoted to the illuminated manuscripts of that library.<sup>1</sup> In one of them, that by Buberl published in 1917, it is also reproduced.<sup>2</sup> But it has not yet received the attention it deserves.

The only other decoration in the manuscript is a portrait of St. Luke (fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Both miniatures are painted on single leaves which are slightly smaller than the manuscript itself, and are pasted into it. In other words, they were not originally intended for the volume in which they are now contained. Moreover, it seems to me that they do not even belong together. That of St. Luke is a typical fourteenth-century work of no more than average quality: it is at once recognizable as such, and hardly invites any detailed comment. I want, however, to plead for a tenth-century date for the miniature of St. John: it is a work of the "Macedonian Renaissance," and outstanding of its kind.

Studied side by side, in reproduction, the two miniatures may not at first appear significantly different. But when seen in the original, the difference in the scale of the figures and in the color scheme is very striking. The portrait of St. Luke is much bigger; the colors are dull and dirty and clash with each other, and the Evangelist has a bright yellow nimbus. The colors of the miniature of St. John, on the other hand, mainly azure and bistre, are very light and airy, and admirably balanced; and the harmonious effect of the scheme as a whole is enlivened by the two bright red areas of the cushion.

The figures of St. John and Prochoros are painted directly onto the neutral parchment, without any indication of background, and are framed by a faint blue line which is hardly visible in the reproduction. Unfortunately the colors have partly flaked off so that the white parchment is exposed. There is no under-drawing. The illusionistic style generally, as well as the rendering of many details, are reminiscent of the best Hellenistic tradition: in fact, if this miniature had survived singly and had not been slipped into a fourteenth-century manuscript, one would never have considered the possibility of a fourteenth-century date. Among the more characteristic features are the hand of God and the extended right hand of the Evangelist, also his slender feet, and, especially, the modelling of his head, which appears as if chiselled in the round, with a remarkable effect of light and shade achieved through red and green pigments discreetly set off with white. Hair and beard are formed by soft, swift brush strokes. The rendering of the head has a close parallel in that of a portrait of St. John, of about the

<sup>1</sup> P. Buberl, *Die Miniaturenhandschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Athen*, Kais. Akademie d. Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl., Denkschriften, 60. Bd., 2. Abh. (Vienna, 1917), p. 23, no. 23; A. Delatte, *Les manuscrits à miniatures et à ornements des bibliothèques d'Athènes*, Bibl. de la Faculté de phil. et lettres de l'Université de Liège, fasc. 34 (Liège-Paris, 1926), p. 46f., no. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Buberl, *op. cit.*, fig. 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 80; Delatte, *op. cit.*, pl. xix.

middle of the tenth century, in a manuscript of the Acts and Epistles in the Bodleian Library (fig. 3)<sup>4</sup> — even though the facial type itself, as well as the style of the drapery, are different. The drapery in the Athens miniature shows a truly amazing comprehension of organic movement, and of the precise function and form of each separate part; it envelops the fully rounded body rather tightly, and its several layers are clearly and carefully distinguished from each other. Highlights are used to bring out the characteristic shapes of the hook-like folds of the garments, but are otherwise only sparingly employed. All this recurs in very much the same way in three closely related sets of portraits of standing evangelists in Gospel books in Paris (fig. 4),<sup>5</sup> Vienna,<sup>6</sup> and formerly in Turin<sup>7</sup> — all from the third quarter of the tenth century. The leaf in Athens may be slightly later and belong to the last quarter. The folds covering the Evangelist's thigh, for instance, can be compared with those found in the portraits in Vat. gr. 364 (fig. 5)<sup>8</sup> and Vienna, suppl. gr. 50\*,<sup>9</sup> both from the very end of the century: these are close, perhaps slightly later, contemporaries of the Athens miniature. When they are confronted, for instance, with the picture of St. Matthew in the Paris manuscript Coislin 20,<sup>10</sup> from about the middle of the eleventh century, where the same system of folds reappears in a much more hardened and schematic manner, it will become quite clear that the leaf in Athens must be placed before the turn of the millennium. In the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to associate it with any known scriptorium; but there is little doubt that the capital has the first claim, if only because of its unusually fine quality.

The palaeographical evidence tends to confirm the early date. The caption with the Evangelist's name is, of course, late, and was probably added when the miniature was inserted in its present place in the fourteenth century. But the verses to the right, two perfect dodecasyllables<sup>11</sup> beautifully written and spaced, which refer to the revelation of the Fourth Gospel amid lightning and thunder, must be contemporary with the miniature itself; moreover, they are executed in the same reddish color which is used for the shades of the hands and fingers of the figures. These verses are written in small uncials, a type of script which changed its character hardly at all between the ninth century and the twelfth,

<sup>4</sup> MS Canon. gr. 110; cf. K. Weitzmann, *Die Byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1935), p. 13f., fig. 14; O. Pächt, *Byzantine Illumination* (Oxford, 1952), pl. 5b.

<sup>5</sup> Bibl. Nat., grec 70; cf. Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 14f., fig. 84.

<sup>6</sup> Nationalbibliothek, theol. gr. 240; cf. Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 15; P. Buberl and H. Gerstinger, *Die byzantinischen Handschriften, 2: Die Handschriften des 10. bis 18. Jahrhunderts*, Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Oesterreich, N.F., Bd. 4 (Leipzig, 1938), no. 3, p. 7ff., pl. II.

<sup>7</sup> University Library, B.VII.33; Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 15; cf. C. Nordenfalk in *Zeitschrift f. Kunstgeschichte*, VIII (1939), p. 72ff., fig. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Weitzmann, *op. cit.*, p. 25, figs. 192, 193.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26, figs. 196, 197; Buberl and Gerstinger, *op. cit.*, no. 4, p. 13ff., pl. v.

<sup>10</sup> H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1929), pl. LXXX. Weitzmann (*op. cit.*, p. 11, note 64) was the first to notice that the Evangelist portraits do not belong to the tenth-century manuscript in which they are now contained, but are of later date.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. P. Maas, "Der byzantinische Zwölfssilber," in *BZ*, XII (1903), p. 278ff. The verses are reprinted by Delatte, *op. cit.*, p. 46. I am greatly indebted to Professor Maas for information about the problems of meter and palaeography.

when it finally disappeared. But a date in the fourteenth century is quite out of the question.

Why was this miniature ever taken to be contemporary with its companion picture, the portrait of St. Luke? It must be admitted that there are similarities as well as differences. The differences are precisely those which distinguish late-Byzantine evangelist portraits from those of earlier periods: the picture of St. Luke shows the characteristically low bench, the sloping shoulders, and the thick waist giving the figure an almost oval outline, which we have learned to associate with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century portraits;<sup>12</sup> and the garment hangs somewhat more loosely round the body than in the earlier work. But in both miniatures the drapery itself is arranged in much the same way, with a sash drawn round the waist of the figure, and a loose end of the garment hanging down from the thigh; and the perfect understanding of the intricate drapery system, the general course of the grooves of folds, even the regular panelling of the furniture, invite detailed comparison, especially in the reproductions which do not bring out the telling differences in the color scheme. A likely explanation is that the portrait of St. Luke is a faithful copy of a much earlier work, which may have been a contemporary, perhaps even a close relative, of that of St. John.<sup>13</sup> It is certainly not a work of the Palaeologan "Renaissance" in the strict sense of the word, but many details of a tenth-century model, especially the drapery, have been reproduced with great competence. The clumsy rendering of the hands and feet, on the other hand, is a characteristic feature of fourteenth-century style.

It is interesting to confront the two miniatures in Athens with an Evangelist portrait in a fourteenth-century Gospel in the Walters Art Gallery which is one of the finest surviving manuscripts of the late Byzantine period (fig. 6).<sup>14</sup> No doubt this is a "Renaissance" product in the grand tradition, a masterpiece in its own right, comparable to the portrait of St. John on the Athens leaf. The truly monumental character of the figure as a whole, and especially the modelling of the face and forehead, immediately recall the style of the tenth century; it has infinitely more in common with the Athens St. John than with its near contemporary, the picture of St. Luke. Still, a glance at the hard, almost metallic, rendering of the highlights, and at the hands and feet of the figure, will satisfy us that this outstanding miniature is really a fourteenth-century imitation; the right hand, for instance, looks as if it were crippled. I think it is possible to be quite definite about the relation of the two works to each other: the miniature in Baltimore was copied from an excellent model of the "Macedonian Renaissance" which must have been a close relative of the Athens portrait. It might almost be called a fourteenth-century version of the style of

<sup>12</sup> Cf. K. Weitzmann, "Constantinopolitan Book Illumination in the Period of the Latin Conquest," in *Gazette des beaux-arts*, LXXXVI (1944), p. 193 ff., esp. p. 213.

<sup>13</sup> On the copying of "Macedonian" manuscripts during the Palaeologan period, cf. K. Weitzmann, "Eine Pariser-Psalter-Kopie des 13. Jahrhunderts auf dem Sinai," in *Jahrbuch der Oesterreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft*, VI (1957), p. 125 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Early Christian and Byzantine Art, An Exhibition held at the Baltimore Museum of Art* (1947), no. 732, pl. cv a.

the leaf in Athens: we could wish for no better demonstration of the difference between Byzantine Hellenism of the tenth and the fourteenth centuries.

St. John in the Athens miniature is represented seated on a throne-like chair with a high back, turning his head towards the hand of God which appears in a segment of the sky, and holding a book scroll in his left hand. With his right hand he makes a gesture of speech towards Prochoros, who is shown on a slightly smaller scale sitting on a low stool at the Evangelist's feet, and writing in a scroll to his dictation. It is at once obvious that this is a very unusual iconographical type.

Portraits of St. John seated and turning round to look up at the hand of God are the exception rather than the rule in middle Byzantine art,<sup>15</sup> but a few miniatures of this type, mostly of rather late date, are known. Outstanding among them is an illustration in an eleventh-century lectionary in the Vatican, Vat. gr. 1156 (fig. 7);<sup>16</sup> another one is contained in a thirteenth-century Gospel in Paris, gr. 51;<sup>17</sup> and a third one in a fourteenth-century manuscript in Moscow.<sup>18</sup> There is even an isolated instance of St. Luke represented in this manner, looking up towards the inspiring dove, in a twelfth-century Gospel in Vienna:<sup>19</sup> this is nothing more than a freak, an adaptation of a miniature of St. John looking up at the hand of God. In all these examples the Evangelist is represented alone, himself writing in the book which he holds on his knee.

The figure of the scribe, on the other hand, derives from the "dictation type" of Evangelist portrait, in which, as a rule, St. John is represented standing to the right, turning round and looking up to the hand of God in the sky, and dictating his Gospel to the writing Prochoros seated at his feet.<sup>20</sup> A miniature in Paris, gr. 230 (fig. 8),<sup>21</sup> of the late tenth century, seems to be the earliest preserved example of this type. The earlier versions of the scene show a plain gold background, but in later miniatures there usually is a mountainous landscape symbolizing the island of Patmos where St. John was traditionally supposed to have written his Gospel. This type became increasingly popular and frequent in middle Byzantine art: from the twelfth century onwards it largely superseded the older formula of St. John sitting in a pensive attitude in his wicker chair.

<sup>15</sup> On Byzantine evangelist portraits, cf. A. M. Friend, "The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts, I," in *Art Studies*, V (1927), p. 115 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Previously reproduced by A. Boeckler, *Formgeschichtliche Studien zur Adagruppe*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Kl., Abhandlungen, N.F., Heft 42 (Munich, 1956), pl. 8a, where the figure is erroneously called St. Matthew instead of St. John.

<sup>17</sup> Omont, *op. cit.*, pl. LXXXII d.

<sup>18</sup> Michel V. Alpatoff, "A Byzantine Illuminated Manuscript of the Palaeologue Epoch in Moscow," in *The Art Bulletin*, XII (1930), p. 207 ff., fig. 2; V. Lazarev, *History of Byzantine Painting* (in Russian) (Moscow, 1948), pl. 314 a. Another miniature of the same type is contained in MS 378 (unpublished) in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

<sup>19</sup> Buberl and Gerstinger, *op. cit.*, pl. XXVIII, 1. The same type is also used for St. Mark in the Vienna manuscript theol. gr. 300, cf. *ibid.*, pl. XXXII, 1, and Lazarev, *op. cit.*, pl. 312 a.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. K. Weitzmann, "The Constantinopolitan Lectionary, Morgan 639," in *Studies in Art and Literature for Belle da Costa Greene* (Princeton, 1954), p. 358 ff., esp. p. 373.

<sup>21</sup> Weitzmann, *Buchmalerei*, fig. 215.

In canonical texts, the name Prochoros occurs only once, in the Acts (6:5), where he is mentioned as one of the seven deacons of Jerusalem, together with Stephen, Philip, and the others. The literary source for the "dictation type" portrait is an apocryphal Greek text of the fifth century, the Acts of St. John,<sup>22</sup> which were allegedly written by Prochoros who poses as the Apostle's disciple, and which contain a detailed account of the writing of the Fourth Gospel. St. John spent three days praying and fasting in solitude on a mountain outside the town, and then amid thunder and lightning received the divine inspiration, and ordered Prochoros to take down whatever he would hear. The dictation took two days and six hours. The text mentions explicitly that the Evangelist made the trembling scribe sit down while he himself remained standing. In other words, the miniature in Paris gr. 230 and its long succession in Byzantine and East Christian art<sup>23</sup> are correct and literal illustrations of a venerable hagiographical text; but the single leaf in Athens, with its two seated figures, does not follow any textual tradition at all. In fact, it is nothing but a contamination of two different portrait types: the seated Evangelist, writing and turning round towards the source of his inspiration, is here combined with the figure of the writing scribe taken from a "dictation" picture showing St. John standing up. The first model must have looked rather like the miniature in Vat. gr. 1156, the second like that in Paris gr. 230; and the Evangelist's right hand, which originally held a pen, was changed into the speaking gesture taken over from the standing portrait. The difference in scale between the two figures, and their rather unorganic combination in a single picture which lacks compositional balance and unity, are additional evidence of their compilation from two different sources.<sup>24</sup>

These facts have a certain bearing on the dates of the two models, and on the antiquity of the pictorial types. The earliest preserved example of the "dictation" picture, as has been mentioned before, belongs to the end of the tenth century, i.e., it is roughly contemporary with the miniature in Athens, and probably even slightly later. It is clear, on the other hand, that the iconographical formula must have been in existence for some time, as it was known to the illuminator of the Athens leaf who borrowed the figure of the writing Prochoros and used it for his own purposes. It may have been created about the middle of the century, when the "Macedonian Renaissance" movement was at its height, and when so many new pictorial types made their first appearance in Byzantine

<sup>22</sup> *Acta Joannis*, ed. Th. Zahn (Erlangen, 1880), pp. LX and 154 ff.; *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, ed. E. Hennecke (Tübingen, 1924), p. 174.

<sup>23</sup> For Armenian examples, cf., e.g., A. M. Friend, "Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts, pt. 2," in *Art Studies*, VII (1929), figs. 32, 35, 36; S. Der Nersessian, *Manuscrits arméniens illustrés* (Paris, 1937), figs. 136, 162; and the same author's *Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts, The Chester Beatty Library* (Dublin, 1958), pls. 23a, 29.

<sup>24</sup> The pictorial type survives, e.g., in the manuscript in Vienna quoted in note 19; cf. Buberl and Gerstinger, *op. cit.*, pl. xxxi, 3, and Lazarev, *op. cit.*, pl. 312 b; also in Iviron 548; cf. *Mönchsland Athos*, ed. F. Dölger (Munich, 1943), p. 209, fig. 127. There are also some isolated examples where St. John is seen dictating without turning round, e.g., Leningrad 101 (cf. Lazarev, *op. cit.*, pl. 259), where there is a similar difference in scale between the two figures. An Ottonian ivory (Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II [Berlin, 1918], no. 44, pl. XIV) may be adduced as affording evidence that this pictorial type, too, existed in Byzantium at least as early as the turn of the millennium.

art.<sup>25</sup> And for the same reason, the formula of St. John writing his Gospel and turning round to look up at the hand of God must be considerably older than its earliest surviving representative, the miniature in the eleventh-century manuscript Vat. gr. 1156. Clearly it must have existed in the tenth century; and we shall even have to consider the possibility that it was not a creation of the middle Byzantine period at all, but a traditional formula which had a long history of its own.

In fact, one can adduce both theological and iconographical arguments in favor of a pre-iconoclastic origin of the figural type. The idea that St. John was the only one among the four evangelists who was "divinely moved by the spirit" goes back to Early Christian literature,<sup>26</sup> and the pictorial type itself is simply a Christianized version of the classical group of the seated poet holding a scroll, and looking round and upwards towards his inspiring muse. On a fifth-century ivory diptych in the Louvre, for instance, one of the six poets who are represented together with their muses (fig. 9),<sup>27</sup> is from every point of view comparable to the Athens Evangelist: their attitudes and movements, and the position of their feet and legs, are almost identical, and their left hands hold the top of the book scroll. The movement of the right arm, too, is similar in both works, even though the poet of the ivory does not extend it in a speaking gesture, but grasps the lower end of the scroll. This pagan formula of a poet looking over his shoulder at an inspiring figure which approaches him from the rear, stands at the end of a long line of classical representations expressing what has been called "supernatural persuasion."<sup>28</sup> The Christian evangelist portrait continues, as it were, this iconographical tradition, i.e., it shows the author turning round and looking up towards the source of his inspiration. This adaptation may well have taken place during the Early Christian period, when the pagan formula was still widely known; and on the evidence of the later Byzantine miniatures of St. John, of the type of Vat. gr. 1156, it would appear that these Early Christian portraits already showed the Evangelist engaged in the act of writing his Gospel.

It is possible to gain certainty about this detail, and about the Early Christian predecessors of this type of portrait generally, by approaching the problem from an entirely different point of view. It can be shown that the identical formula was taken up by western illumination as early as the late eighth century; in other words that it must have existed in Byzantium during the pre-iconoclastic period. It makes its appearance in a whole group of Gospel manuscripts produced at the palace scriptorium of Charlemagne, the earliest of all Carolingian schools of illumination,<sup>29</sup> which stands, as it were, at

<sup>25</sup> Cf. K. Weitzmann, "Das Evangelion im Skevophylakion zu Lavra," in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, VIII (1936), p. 89.

<sup>26</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI, XIV, 7; for this and related texts see M. Schapiro, "Two Romanesque Drawings in Auxerre and Some Iconographic Problems," in *Studies ... for Belle da Costa Greene*, p. 336. Cf. also Rev. I:12: "I turned to see the voice that spake with me."

<sup>27</sup> W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz, 1952), no. 69, p. 44, pl. 23.

<sup>28</sup> E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology* (New York, 1939), p. 165, fig. 120.

<sup>29</sup> W. Koehler, *Die karolingischen Miniaturen, 2: Die Hofschule Karls des Grossen* (Berlin, 1958), p. 9.

the beginning of western figural art on the continent of Europe. The works of the "palace school" are all of a pronounced aristocratic character, show abundant use of gold, silver, and purple colors and of other precious materials, and include several manuscripts with dedicatory verses or inscriptions referring to their production at the Emperor's order. It goes without saying that the illuminators working in Charlemagne's palace scriptorium had access to Greek and Latin manuscripts imported from Mediterranean countries, splendid and costly gifts sent from Rome and Constantinople, of a magnificence which had up to then been quite unknown in the unenlightened north, destined to be kept as showpieces at the imperial court rather than to adorn the shelves of an ordinary monastic library.<sup>30</sup>

The principal models used for the evangelist portraits of the palace school were quite different from the figural type with which we are here concerned.<sup>31</sup> The figures of the evangelists themselves represent a few standard types which are constantly repeated: most of them dip their pens into the ink, others are engaged in the act of writing, or simply hold their books with both hands or support them on their knees.<sup>32</sup> With the exception only of those in the Godescalc Evangelistary, the earliest manuscript of the group, they are all set in arched frames, with their symbols appearing in the lunette of the arcade. It seems that several models of different date and origin were used, all of them Italian and showing strong Byzantine influence. No manuscripts of this kind have been preserved, but the evangelist pictures of one of them survive in an Anglo-Saxon copy, the Codex Aureus in Stockholm, written at Canterbury about the middle of the eighth century.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the general arrangement of the miniatures representing St. John in the Stockholm Codex (fig. 10) and in the Gospels from Lorsch (fig. 11), one of the outstanding products of the Carolingian palace school, is extremely similar:<sup>34</sup> there is an atmospheric background of changing colors; the figure is framed by an arcade supported by columns with bases and capitals; two curtains fixed on a rod connecting the two capitals are draped round or near the columns; and the symbol in the lunette has a nimbus and is seen in profile. The figures of the Evangelists themselves are not so similar, but have a very close parallel in another Gospel belonging to the palace school, and now kept in Abbeville:<sup>35</sup> here St. John (fig. 12) is seen entirely *en face*, seated on a cushion and holding with his left hand a book resting on his knees. The only difference is that in the Stockholm miniature the slightly raised right hand performs a gesture of blessing, while the Abbeville Evangelist holds a pen. Most of the evangelist portraits of the palace school conform more or less to

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> The most recent studies devoted to the models of the evangelist portraits of the palace school are A. Boeckler, "Die Evangelistenbilder der Adagruppe," in *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, dritte Folge, 3/4 (1952/3), p. 121 ff.; and E. Rosenbaum, "The Evangelist Portraits of the Ada School and their Models," in *The Art Bulletin*, XXXVIII (1956), p. 81 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Koehler, *op. cit.*, pls. 1b-3a; 38-41; 54, 56, 58, 60; 81, 83, 85, 87; 94-97; and 104, 106, 108, 110.

<sup>33</sup> Boeckler, *Evangelistenbilder*, pp. 122 ff.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, figs. 2 and 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 5.

this general pattern, or else can be shown to derive from similar continental, probably Italian, models.<sup>36</sup>

There is just one significant exception. In the portrait of St. Mark in the Soissons Gospels (fig. 13),<sup>37</sup> another major work of the palace scriptorium, the framing arcade with its capitals and curtains, and with the symbol in the lunette, is exactly the same as before; but obviously the human figure belongs to an entirely different tradition. The Evangelist is now seen in profile, writing in the book which is displayed on a separate lectern to the right; and at the same time he turns round and looks upwards. There seems to be no reason for the movement of his head, and his glance is not focused: he just gazes into space. There are other contradictions: the left foot, for instance, is slightly raised, as if it were placed on the footstool; but in point of fact it has no support at all. It appears that a portrait type which did not originally belong to the series, but was borrowed from some other context, has here been forcibly made to fit into the traditional arcade for which it was not originally intended. Still, this profile type with turned head is a regular feature among the evangelist portraits of the palace school: it recurs in every single Gospel of the group. In Abbeville it is used for St. Luke,<sup>38</sup> and in the Harley Gospels and in the Ada manuscript in Trier (fig. 14) for St. Matthew;<sup>39</sup> in this last example, the raised left foot again lacks its natural support. Finally, it reappears in a slightly altered form in the Lorsch Gospels,<sup>40</sup> the latest manuscript of the group. The identical portrait type is also found in some north French and German derivatives of the school, for instance in the Gospels from Mayence formerly in Gotha,<sup>41</sup> and, among works of the second half of the century, in the "Gospels of Ste. Aure"<sup>42</sup> and in the beautiful manuscript in the Cathedral Treasure of Prague.<sup>43</sup> Everywhere the same formula is used: the Evangelist is seen in profile, engaged in the act of writing, and at the same time he turns round and looks up towards some invisible goal. His symbol always appears in the central section of the upper part of the miniature, usually inside an arcade or a similar architectural framework.

<sup>36</sup> This is a short summary of the arguments of Boeckler, who made the Codex Aureus the point of departure of his investigations. This is not the place to discuss his theory in any detail; but I want to point out its basic fallacy. The combination of arcade and draped curtain which is found in the evangelist portraits of the Codex Aureus, recurs in the Carolingian palace school only in the Gospels from Soissons and Lorsch, i.e., in the two latest manuscripts of the group; in other words, the frontal evangelist portraits framed by an arcade, but without curtains, as they are found in the earlier Gospels of the palace school, should not be connected with the Codex Aureus or its model. The model which included the draped curtains became available only towards the end of the working life of the school. For the earlier manuscripts, the possibility of a Greek model should be taken into account: cf. Rosenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 88. Rosenbaum also correctly characterizes the "curtain type" model as a late and secondary source.

<sup>37</sup> Boeckler, *op. cit.*, fig. 11; Rosenbaum, *op. cit.*, fig. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Rosenbaum, *op. cit.*, fig. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Boeckler, *op. cit.*, fig. 9; Koehler, *op. cit.*, pls. 54, 94.

<sup>40</sup> Koehler, *op. cit.*, pl. 110.

<sup>41</sup> E. Baron, "Mainzer Buchmalerei in karolingischer und fröhottonischer Zeit," in *Jahrbuch f. Kunsthissenschaft*, VII (1930), p. 107ff., pl. I, I.

<sup>42</sup> Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 1171; cf. A. Boinet, *La miniature carolingienne* (Paris, 1913), pl. cxxxvii b.

<sup>43</sup> A. Podlaha, *Die Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels* (Topographie d. hist. u. Kunstdenkmale im Kgr. Böhmen) (Prague, 1904), fig. 9.

The origin of these contradictions will at once become clear when we turn to the portrait of St. Mark in the Godescalc Evangelistary (fig. 16),<sup>44</sup> the earliest manuscript of the palace school, which was written by order of Charlemagne himself between 781 and 783. There is no arcade—it appears that the Italian model with its architectural framework, which was used for most of the later miniatures of the group, was not yet available—and the Evangelist's gaze, backwards and upwards, is not irrational as in the other examples, but has a precise meaning: he looks at his symbol, which appears in the top left-hand corner of the picture. It must have been this identical pictorial type which was used by the illuminators of the later Gospel manuscripts of the school: they transferred it into an architectural framework which they took over from a new and different set of models, and which had the symbols inserted in the semicircle of the arcade. This is how the motif of the evangelist turning round and looking upwards came to be deprived of its meaning.

Thus far I have more or less followed the arguments of the late Professor Boeckler who was the first to realize that all of these portraits of evangelists turning round and contained in an arcade, with their symbols appearing in the lunette, represented a combination of heterogeneous elements derived from two entirely different sets of models.<sup>45</sup> It was Boeckler, too, who first put forward the theory that this particular figure type was not borrowed from an Italian model as were all the others, but directly from a Byzantine manuscript. He pointed out that the four evangelists in the Godescalc Codex, the earliest and in many respects the closest copy of that model, are the only ones produced in the palace scriptorium who are bearded, as Byzantine evangelists usually are; and moreover that in some of the later and artistically superior manuscripts of the school in which the evangelist turning round and looking up reappears, even the style of the drapery still clearly betrays the Byzantine prototype.<sup>46</sup> Evidently the Greek manuscript through which this pictorial type was transmitted was kept in the palace scriptorium and was accessible to the illuminators during the school's entire period of activity.

Finally, Boeckler made an attempt to trace the iconographical formula itself back to extant Byzantine evangelist portraits. But I cannot follow him when he adduces a Greek eleventh-century manuscript in Berlin (fig. 15) as containing the closest Byzantine parallel.<sup>47</sup> The outstanding difference is only too obvious: the evangelist in Berlin does not turn round. Moreover, he is not even engaged in the act of writing, but leans forward in an almost violent movement to dip his pen into the inkstand—an action quite incompatible with that of looking back over his shoulder. To add to the confusion, Boeckler argues that an earlier version of this type of portrait may have included the evangelist's symbol; but he does not say what the exact compositional relation between figure and symbol may have been.

<sup>44</sup> Boeckler, *op. cit.*, fig. 10; Rosenbaum, *op. cit.*, fig. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>47</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

I think there can be no doubt that the Greek prototype of the figure of St. Mark in the Godescalc Codex and its successors in the works of the palace scriptorium was precisely the pictorial formula which is preserved in the portrait of St. John in the eleventh-century manuscript, Vat. gr. 1156: the Evangelist engaged in the act of writing, holding the book with his free left hand, and at the same time turning round and looking up at the source of his inspiration, the hand of God which appears in the top left hand corner of the picture. A comparison of our figures 7 and 16 offers far more convincing proof of Boeckler's main thesis than the comparison with the miniature in Berlin proposed by Boeckler himself. We may take it that the Godescalc illustration was derived directly from an early Byzantine ancestor of the Vatican portrait.

In connection with the Athens leaf this excursus into Carolingian illumination is relevant because it affords independent evidence that the iconographical type with which we are here concerned, and which, as we saw, is ultimately based on a pagan formula, can indeed be traced back to a Byzantine evangelist portrait of the pre-iconoclastic period.<sup>48</sup> As the iconoclastic controversy began in 726, and Godescalc started work on his manuscript in 781, the latest possible date of his Greek model is the first quarter of the eighth century; but in all probability it was much older. One would like to assume that it was a type of evangelist portrait that was current in early Byzantine art, but that fell into disgrace when religious book illustration was resumed after the end of iconoclasm in the second half of the ninth century. The Vatican miniature comes closest to this early Byzantine formula; but the figure of St. John on the Athens leaf, too, preserves most of its characteristic features; and so do the Carolingian portraits of the palace school. Thus, for instance, the system of folds covering the Evangelist's right thigh in the Athens miniature, and the loose end of drapery hanging down from his chair, are found in a very similar manner in the illustration of St. Mark in the Soissons Gospels which, as Boeckler has correctly pointed out,<sup>49</sup> is, from a stylistic point of view, the closest and most competent Carolingian copy of the entire series.

Did this early Byzantine prototype include the Evangelist's symbol, as Boeckler believed on the evidence of the Carolingian copy in the Godescalc Codex? In spite of all attempts to prove the contrary, there is really nothing to show that any early Byzantine portraits contained the symbolic animals associated with the figures of the individual evangelists.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the awkward manner in which the Godescalc symbol fits into the picture suggests *prima facie* that it was not derived from the same model: the lion is precariously poised on the purple strip carrying the inscription, and its halo

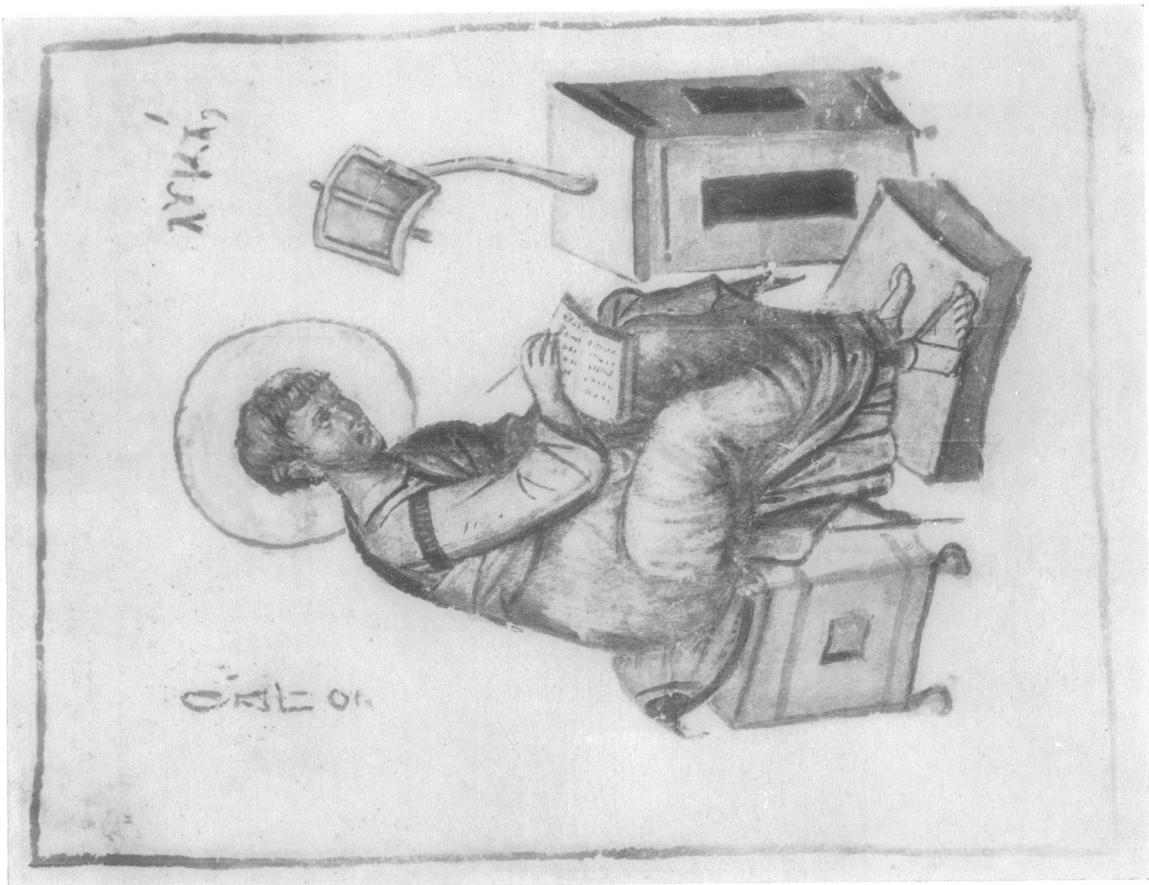
<sup>48</sup> A similar conclusion is also suggested by a miniature of St. John in an Italian ninth-century manuscript of the Acts in Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, B.25.II, fol. 87; cf. E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, IV (1947), no. 430; B. Degenhart, "Autonome Zeichnungen bei mittelalterlichen Künstlern," in *Münchener Jahrbuch f. bildende Kunst*, Dritte Folge, I (1950), p. 137, fig. 83.

<sup>49</sup> *Evangelistenbilder*, p. 130.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. E. Kitzinger, "The Coffin Reliquary," in *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, ed. C. F. Battiscombe (Durham, 1956), p. 229 ff. Boeckler's arguments have been refuted in detail by Rosenbaum, *op. cit.* p. 89, note 61.

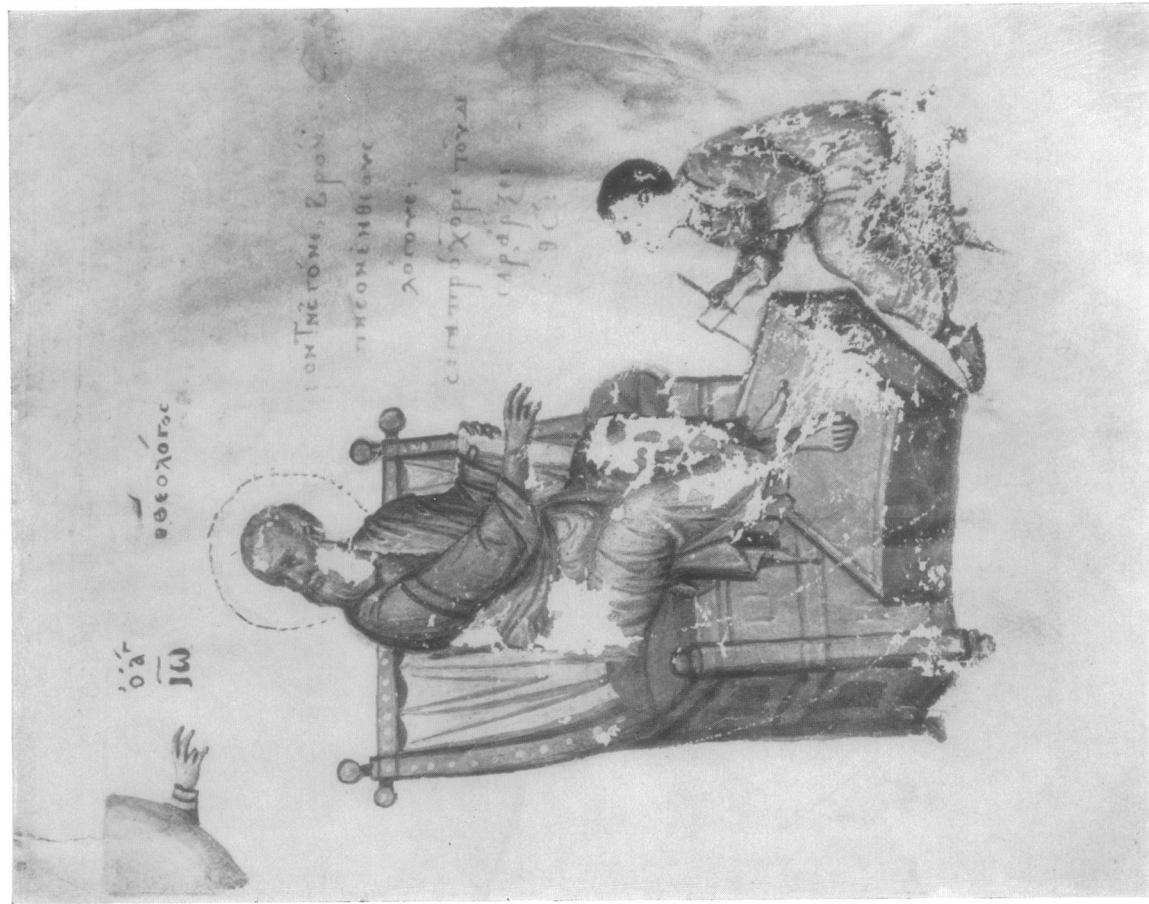
clashes with that of the Evangelist. Clearly, it stems from a different iconographical tradition. In other words, the pre-iconoclastic prototype of the portrait of St. Mark in the Godescalc manuscript, which, as we saw, was the same as that of St. John on the Athens leaf and in Vat. gr. 1156, already represented St. John looking up at the hand of God, according to the texts mentioned above referring to the Evangelist's divine inspiration.

The single leaf in Athens, freed from its fourteenth-century associations and surroundings, will take a distinguished place in the history of Byzantine miniature painting; not only because it is an outstanding example of Greek tenth-century illumination, a work of the "Macedonian Renaissance" which was in all probability produced in the capital itself, but also because the figure of St. John preserves the pictorial type of a lost evangelist portrait of the early Byzantine period, which must have been popular in its day.



2. Folio 99v. St. Luke

Athens, National Library, 71

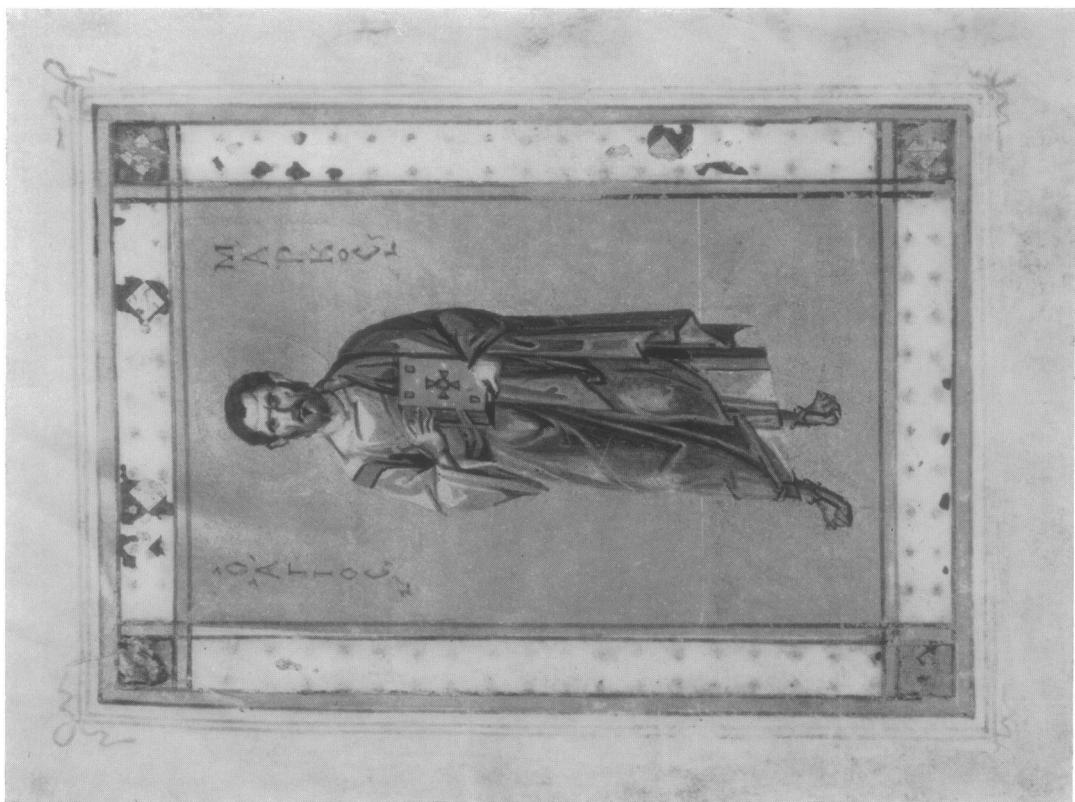


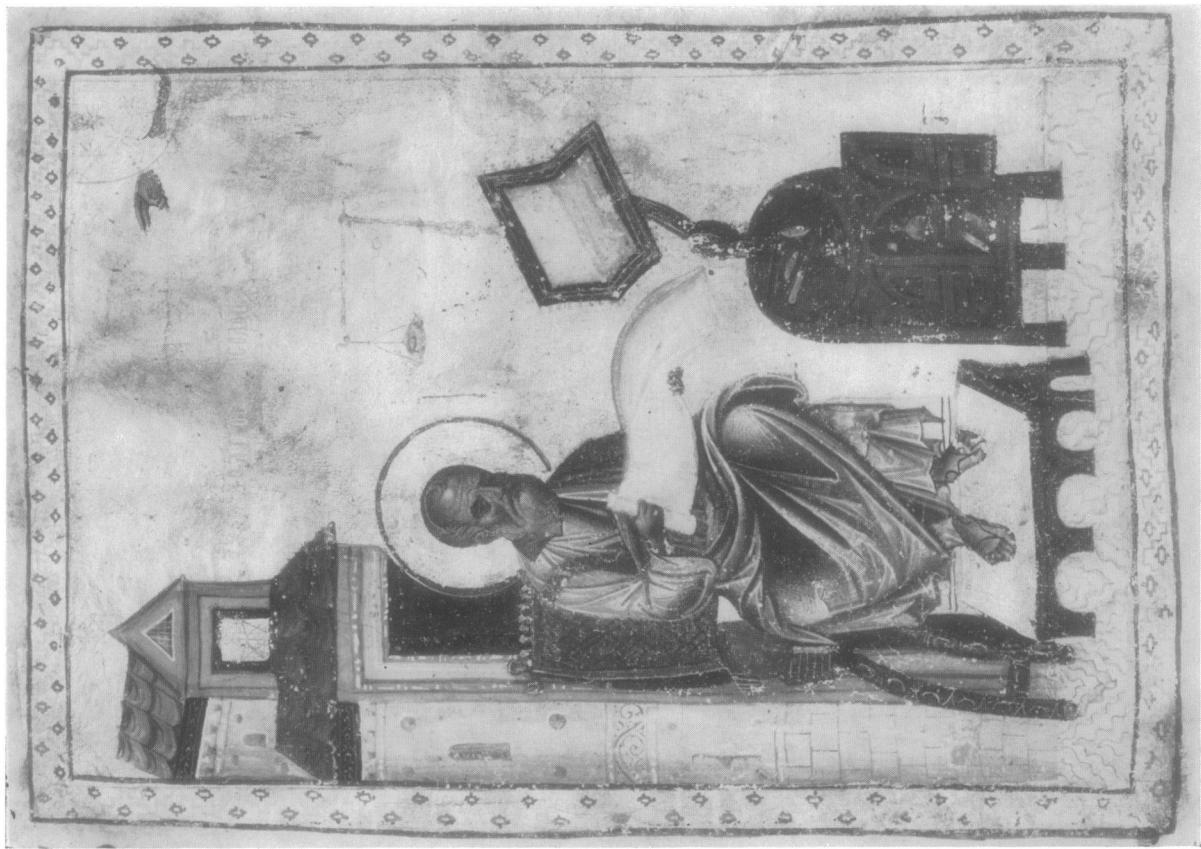
1. Folio 158. St. John

3. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. gr. 110, fol. 142v. St. John



4. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 70, fol. 113v. St. Mark





6. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, M 531, fol. 2. St. John



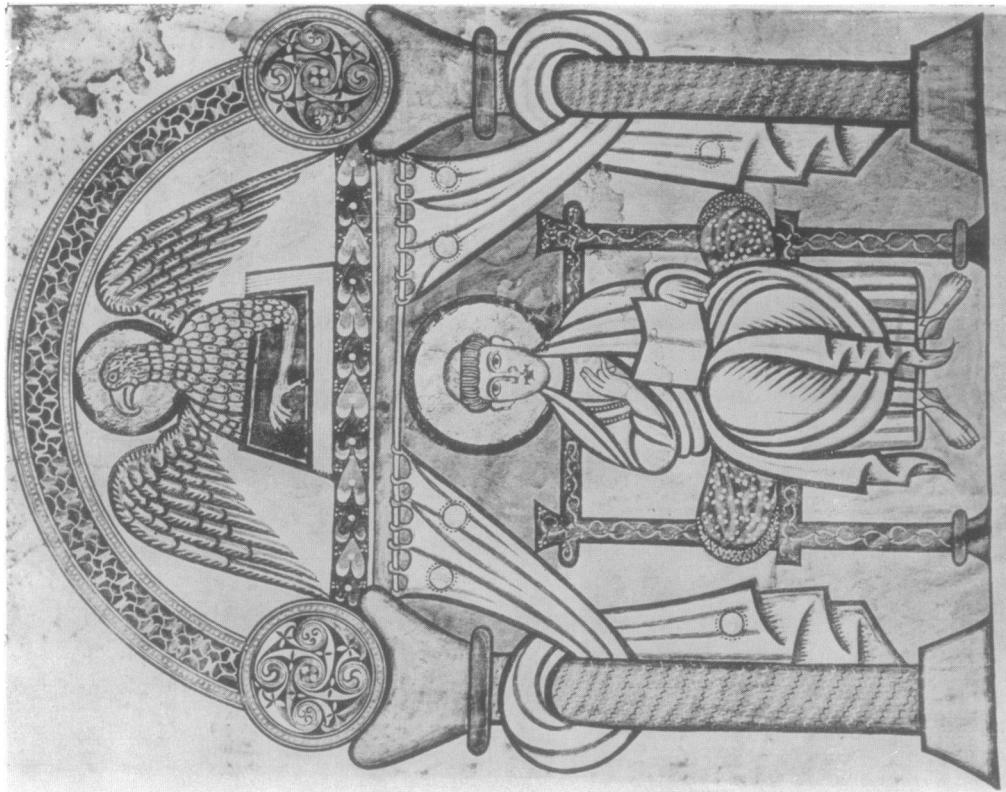
5. Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, gr. 364, fol. 11. St. Matthew



7. Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, gr. 1156, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>. St. John

8. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, gr. 230, p. 463.  
St. John and Prochoros

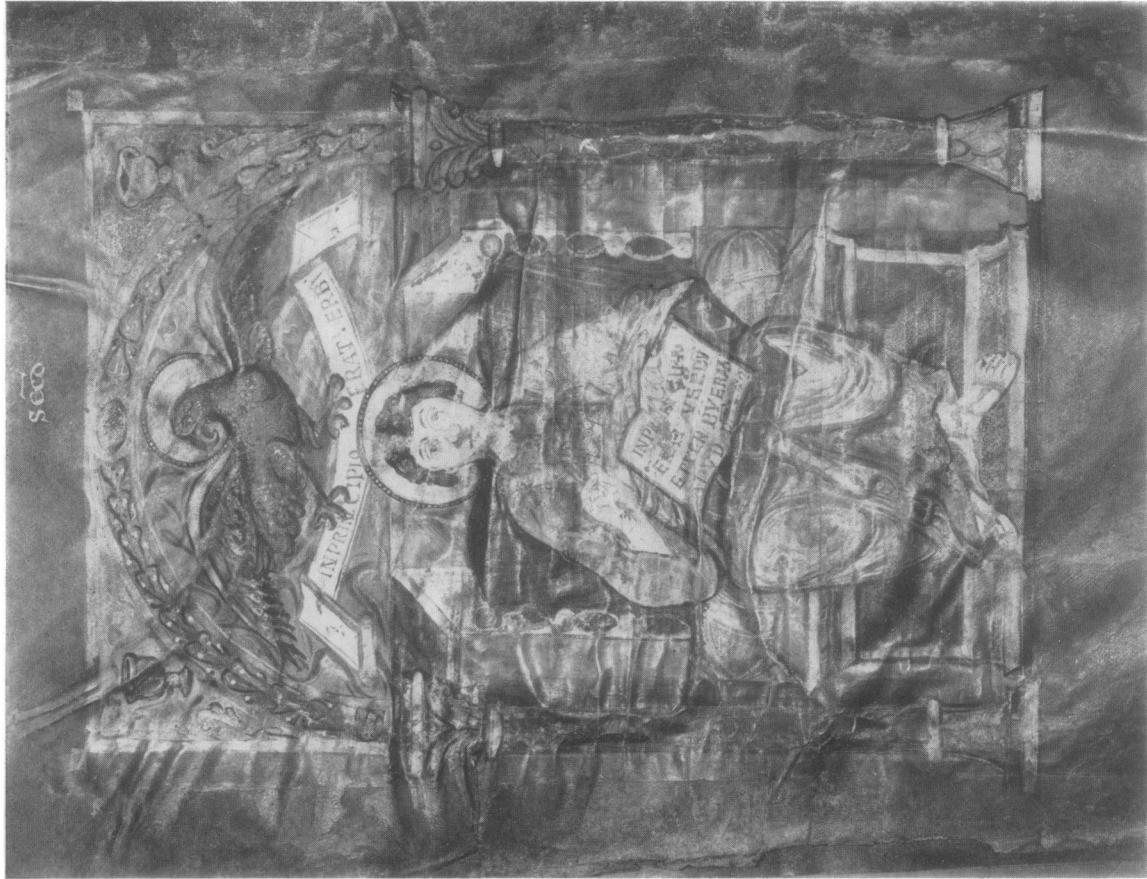




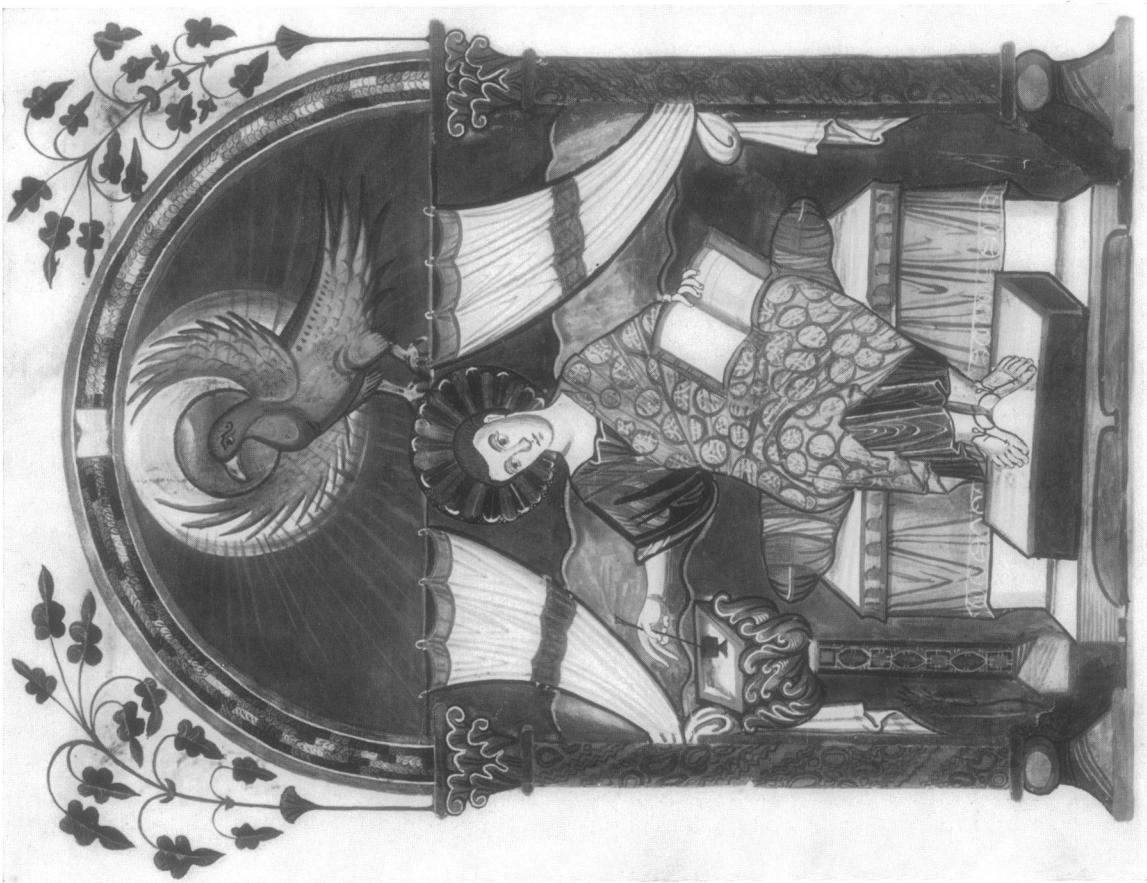
10. Stockholm, Royal Library, A.135, fol. 150v. St. John



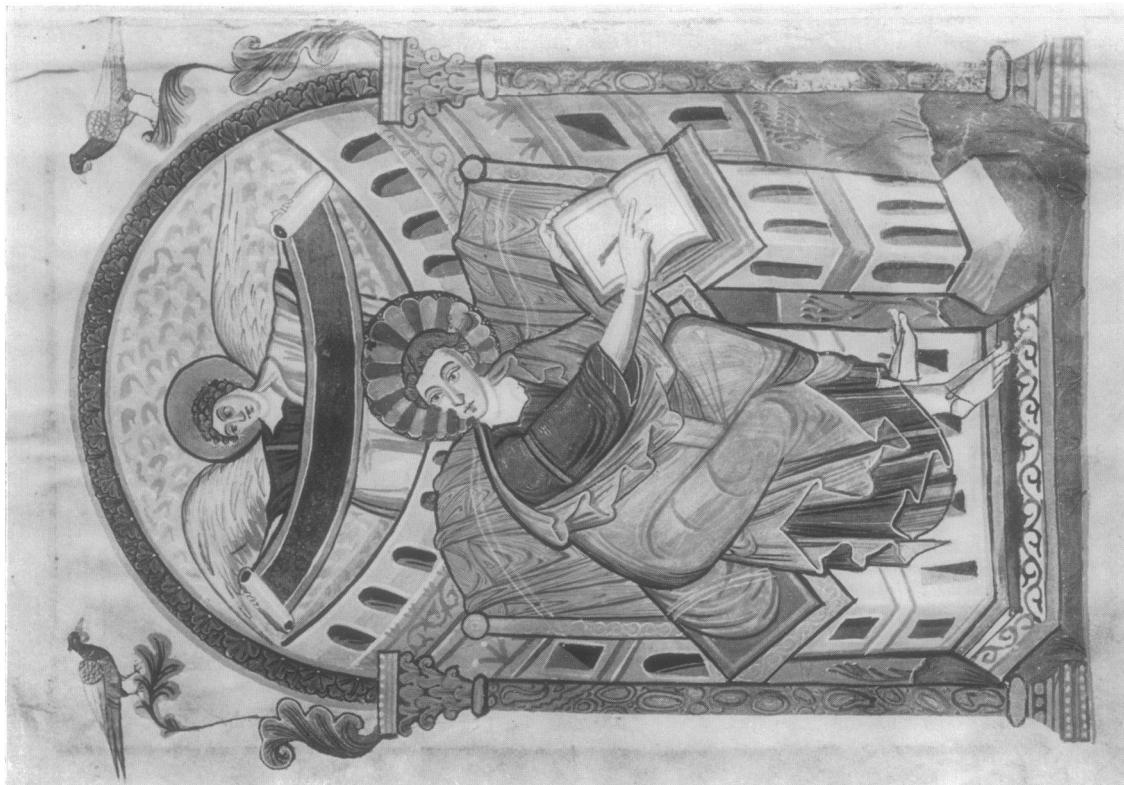
9. Paris, Louvre. Ivory Diptych, detail.  
A Poet and His Muse



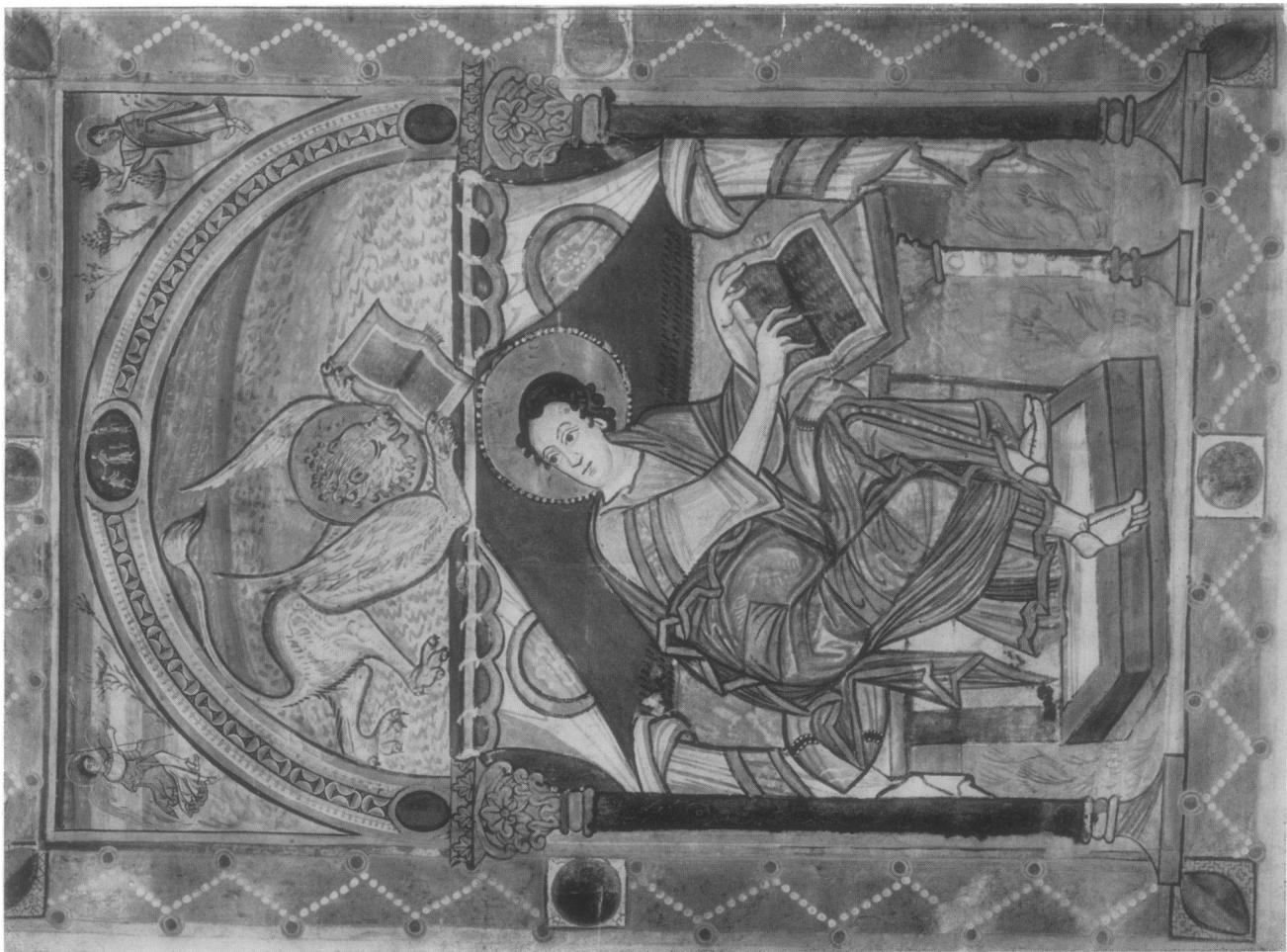
11. Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Pal. lat. 50, fol. 67<sup>v</sup>. St. John



12. Abbeville, Bibliothèque Municipale, 4, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. St. John



14. Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 22, fol. 15v. St. Matthew



13. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 8850, fol. 81v. St. Mark



15. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, gr. 4º 39, fol. 164. St. Luke



16. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. lat. 1203, fol. 1v. St. Mark